

1   Claims

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3   1.   A software agent for representing a person's  
4   identity, the software agent being adapted to dock a  
5   dockable module, the dockable module comprising a method  
6   means for performing a function, wherein the software  
7   agent further comprises an intermodule communication  
8   means for mapping a request from a requesting module to  
9   the method means in the dockable module.

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11   2.   A software agent as claimed in claim 1 wherein, the  
12   method means is adapted to perform said function  
13   responsive to said request.

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15   3.   A software agent as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2  
16   wherein, said request from the requesting module  
17   comprises a label specifying a function and said method  
18   means in said dockable module corresponds to the  
19   specified function.

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21   4.   A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim  
22   wherein said intermodule communication means comprises a  
23   store of labels and associated modules.

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25   5.   A software agent as claimed in claim 4 wherein said  
26   store of labels and associated modules is a table.

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28   6.   A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim  
29   wherein said method means is adapted to perform the  
30   function of docking said dockable module with said agent.

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32   7.   A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim  
33   wherein said method means is adapted to perform the

1 function of registering a label with said intermodule  
2 communication means, the label specifying a function  
3 supported by said dockable module.  
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5 8. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim  
6 wherein said method means is adapted to perform the  
7 function of undocking said dockable module from an agent.  
8

9 9. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim  
10 wherein said method means is adapted to perform the  
11 function of requesting the discarding of a label from the  
12 intermodule communication means, the label specifying a  
13 function supported by said dockable module.  
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15 10. A software agent as claimed in any preceding claim  
16 wherein, said method means is adapted to perform the  
17 function of updating said dockable module within said  
18 agent.  
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20 11. A method of deployment of a module in an agent  
21 comprising the steps of:  
22 receiving a request for deployment of said module;  
23 maintaining registration information relating to a  
24 function supported by said module; and  
25 invoking said function.  
26

27 12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein,  
28 the step of maintaining registration information  
29 comprises maintaining a store of labels and associated  
30 modules, each label specifying a function supported by a  
31 module.  
32

1 13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein said store  
2 of labels and associated modules is a table.

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4 14. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13  
5 wherein, the step of maintaining registration information  
6 comprises the step of registering a label specifying a  
7 function supported by said module.

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9 15. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13  
10 wherein, said module is a docked module and said step of  
11 maintaining registration information comprises the step  
12 of unregistering a label specifying a function supported  
13 by said docked module.

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15 16. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13  
16 wherein said module is a replacement module and said step  
17 of maintaining registration information comprises the  
18 steps of:

19 unregistering a label specifying a function supported by  
20 a docked module from said agent; and

21 registering a label specifying a function supported by  
22 said replacement module with said agent

23 and said method further comprises the steps of:

24 storing information related to the state of said docked  
25 module; and

26 instantiating said replacement module using said stored  
27 information.

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29 17. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 16  
30 wherein, said step of maintaining registration  
31 information further comprises the step of queuing calls  
32 to the docked modules' registered labels, prior to the

1 step of registering a label specifying a function  
2 supported by said replacement module.

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4 18. A method as claimed in any of claims 11 to 17  
5 wherein, the function supported by said module is the  
6 method of deployment of said module.

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8 19. A computer program comprising program instructions  
9 for causing a computer to perform the method of claims 11  
10 to 18.